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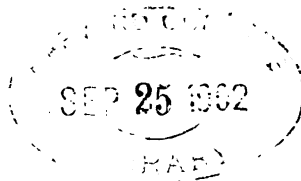
FROM

Prof. C. E. Norton

JESUS WEPT

AN EASTER POEM

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Prof. G. E. Horton

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JESUS WEPT

AN EASTER POEM

It was morning. All heaven's resplendent suns
Flashed forth their dazzling lights, anew.
"Hail, holy light!" the angels sang, as in bands
Over the lily-scented fields they flew.
Eagerly-joyous bands. What means this rapture?
What these strangely mingled sounds—this commotion?
In all the sun-lit fields, and on golden streets,
Where only angels' rustling wings make motion
Ever, in soft music with their sandaled feet,
Is heard all this swift, eager sound.
The flashing lights new worlds of witchery reveal,
On every side—far—near—around,
From hearts of roses rare, the dewdrops spring,
Poise, flash, as if the angels' gaze
To woo and hold. Why this enchanting rivalry
Among the flowers of heaven's maze,
This holy morn? For far—near—and all around,
Are lilies—lilies born in heaven.
Lilies, around whose stately forms, the angels
Knelt and prayed, that would be given,
Only softest airs to sway the cradles
Of their infant buds, so, to hold

In their heart of hearts, their incense, sweet and pure,
Till this fair morn should come. Behold !
Lilies, that vied with the roses in coquetry,
The smile of the angels to win,
To be garnered to lay at the Risen Lord's feet.
They had blossomed only for Him.
And, see! All heaven's bird and insect life, on wing.
For all around—and far—and near,
I catch the glints of blue and gold of gauzy wing,
Of rainbow butterfly, as sailing, to bear,
On perfumed air, their gifts of nectar, sweet.
They vie with the flash on emerald wing,
And ruby throat of birds, so full of life and song,
That if, by chance, they light to sing,
On the regal lily's branch, or rose's spray,
They tremble, swing and sway for joy.
Beneath that weight of ecstasy, and the spell,
Of fascination, holds to toy,
With eye and ear, heart and soul, in mad delight,
And dewdrops hang their heads, to own,
That they can only shine. Hold, birds in heaven,
Hold thy songs? No! Thy every tone
Was born and nursed within the tiniest cells
Of warmest hearts, to carol glee
And praise, and welcome, thy tributes, to this day.
Then sing—and surely it shall be,
Thy rippling melodies, all heaven will entrance.

And, now, again, upon the ear,
From all around, new sounds are swelling—the play
Of instruments—now far—now near,
Commingle with the tread of feet,
Of myriad feet, to rhythmic motion, wed.
Nearer it comes—all my inmost soul it thrills.
The changing beams of light, instead,
Of slowly rolling back, like draperies of gold,
Are dancing, as they swing and sway,
And on my quickened sight, from jasper walls
And alabaster pillars play
Iridescent scintillations. In these beams,
The blush heightens on the rose's cheek,
And to the ear attuned afresh by this strange light,
The lilies' bells, in music speak.
Nearer they come—heaven's host—nearer they come.
O! heart of mine, stand still—stand still!
My soul is thrilled with music's ecstasy,
Mine eyes with heaven's wonders fill.
See! all around are angels, standing—so near,
So near—in unison, I see,
Their heart-beats rise and fall in music's glow.
Look—look! again, and can it be,
With harps, all wreathed with lilies' purest bells,
I see, from heaven's remotest bound,
All gathered here, in praise, to-day, more angels.
Look—look! again—for all around,

The gleaming light divides. Afresh from angels' lips,
Break forth, like liquid pearls, new song,
That gathers, in its fullness, the caroled rapture
Of the birds; till clear, sweet and long,
The symphonies awake, and lily bells shake out
In brimming glee, from hearts of gold,
The perfumed dewdrops garnered for this day,
And hiddened in their own hearts' fold.
See! the gleaming light divides. See! upon His throne,
O! picture rare to mortal eye,
There, upon His shining, golden throne—is Christ,
Heaven's Risen Lord! Those, standing by,
His angels—who through long centuries old,
Each year, with incense and praise, at dawn,
Have celebrated His return to them,
Have called it their glad Easter morn.
All heaven's choicest gifts they bring with joy,
To lay at His dear feet, this day,
The gladdest day in all heaven's calendar.
And, nearest to the throne, you may
See the little band of earthly followers,
Who, each year with beaming eyes aglow,
Repeat the story, old, but ever new,
To heaven's listening throng. They know
Its every word, and yet, tears of joy
Will fall for His return to them,
And tears of sorrow drop, as they rehearse

All the anguish keen, they felt, when
 He left His home in paradise, to go
 Upon that long, dark sojourn, drear.
 The radiant face of the "Beloved John,"
 So near his Master's side, shines clear,
 With thought of all Christ's labors passed and gone,
 With thought of joy at His return,
 With all His victories won—and heart and tongue,
 Give utterance to inward fire's burn.
 Of all His victories won. A world reclaimed.
 To hearts of men, long dead in sin,
 Redemption's sacred healing came with power.
 How love had conquered hate. To win
 Reward in heaven, through love of Christ on earth,
 Swayed and held hearts of men, below,
 Man's love for man, all dark passion's rule subdued,
 And faith and love for Christ did grow.
 "See Christ! while angels here, around Thy throne
 Their homage bring to Thee, they bear,
 On this glad morn, from yonder gates of pearl,
 The gifts of incense, praise and prayer
 That, from the roseate hour of dawn, on earth,
 Have been ascending up to Thee,
 To mingle with our own—fresh with the dews of earth,
 Proofs, in them from loyal hearts, we see.
 The chant of vested choirs, with note from silvery chimes,
 With those from grand cathedral's dome,

Floats up, and ever fuller swells, as hymns
And Methodistic ardor come,
No creed their adoration holds aloof, this morn.
In pure, white, silent Quaker heart,
The fire of song glows, too, and if unheard below,
In heaven's choir bears its part.
The cruel sufferings endured for all,
In that dark sojourn, proved not, in vain,
And man, for love of man and God, now say,
They would not use the cross, again."
"Glory to God—Amen! Peace on the earth
Is now, and evermore shall be."
The harps and lily bells together played,
With cymbals sound, in praise and glee,
"Is now, and ever shall"—But, ere the blessed words
Could repeat themselves in heaven,
A sound—a strange, discordant sound—a rushing sound,
Draws near, with shock to angels given.
The affrighted bands divide—and lo! with face
All pallid with emotion's ebb,
Paul, the fearless, dauntless Paul, lay prostrate
Before the Saviour's throne, as dead.
It was his joy, to greet his Lord, this day,
This Easter morn—this day of days,
To him, in heaven. To greet Him with all
His great soul's adoration—praise.
With quickened step the angels haste to raise him,

And, as erect, at last, he stands,
And his dimmed eyes rest on his Master's face,
Long seem the moments that it spans,
Erect, as marble statue, set, he stood.
Nearer the angels draw—on cheek
And brow their hot breath falls—and in emotion's thrall,
Grasping his hand they cry—"Speak—speak!"
Then, as if awakened by their tightened clasp,
The warm blood courses through his frame,
His kindling eye sought, again, his Master's face,
And he assayed to speak His name.
"Hail! Holy Risen Lord! Upon this Easter morn,
I sought, as through long centuries drifts
To bear, from yonder gates of pearl,
That leads to earth's domains, the gifts,
The Easter gifts, that ever rise to Thee,
On this, heaven's holy Easter morn.
To bear them, until no space, around Thy throne,
Is left unfilled. From golden dawn,
Busy and happy I had been, until the last
Returning, I found, so changed,
Beloved Saint Peter's face and mien,
I looked, in wonder—and—all chained,
With bolt and bar the pearly gates, this day.
The first such scene on Easter morn,
In all the histories of years, in heaven, since
Among the angels this day was born.

' Why, holy brother—why such mysterious change ?
Why barred—why even closed this gate ?
Thou knowest offerings ascend throughout the time
From earliest hour until late.'
He sought to speak, but, to my questionings,
Only convulsive shudder gave,
And raised his hand, as if to backward keep my steps.
I heeded not, nor stopped. Naught save
His pain, I knew. I clasped his hand of lead and ice
That lay on that golden bar,
And a chill—a thrill of pain, swept over me.
He looked, as if some glowing star,
From which the fire had burned, and dropped—a soulless stone.
' Brother, tell me,' again, I cried—
When such frightful sound arose outside the gate,
We forward sprang, and Peter tried
The bar, as if in doubt, its strength it could retain.
' Brother,' I gasped—' I know that sound.
It is useless, now, its import longer to conceal.'
' Oh! wretched day '—and, turning round
Fell to my arms—' Oh! wretched day—Oh! godless one,'
Repeating, ' I know it all.'
I said: ' There is war—war upon the earth, again,'
And springing forward, both, let fall,
The golden bar, and pushed back the ponderous gate.
' See, Paul! a battle rages, there!'
He cried. ' A battle on our holy days of days!

See smoke—hear groans ascending, where,
Only prayer and praise should come. Shut out the sight!'
And such sights as there we looked upon,
Oh! Christ! no tongue in heaven could describe,
And, as for brains, with which to own
And carry on the damning trade of war,
Only hell's lowest depths could furnish them.
Every device to mutilate—to kill was there,
That it would seem that Satan, when,
In his most diabolic hate, and with the aid
Of all his arch demons, there, could plan.
And—it was not the first of battles that had raged.
Far away as the eye could scan,
Murder's foul, black track was seen. Oh! sickening sight.
Bare and desolate Thy fair land;
Land, that should have smiled in peace this day;
Land, so fed by Thy Christly hand,
So richly fed, that diamonds hid beneath its soil,
To woo and win for peaceful art,
By peaceful souls inclined. It had been sought by such.
Where only quiet, gentle heart,
And restful souls had been, and grown in wealth
Of home and firesides, that slept,
In peace so long, because erected in Thy name.
Then—what, and why, and who thought best,
Such woeful change to bring? Hear me, O, Christ, hear me!
Such frightful scenes we looked upon,

Listen, O, Christ! We saw the headless trunks of men,
Oh! tell me not, from Thee, 'Begone.'
We saw the headless trunks of men spring up,
Spring up, and stand, erect, in air,
In death's contorting agonies. Think of it, Christ!
Man, created in Thine image, fair,
Writhing in all distortion's cursed forms,
For what? To satisfy the greed,
The soul-destroying—damning greed for conquest's gain.
Indulged by those whose seeming creed,
Is, to spread the Gospel's teaching o'er the world,
And world, to them, is any land,
Where, first, gold allures to coffers fill, and crowns
Another gem might own. Thy hand,
Thy bounteous hand, remaining unrecognized,
Save only as it leads through these.
Kings, Queens and rulers, base hypocrites becoming.
First, aggrandizement, for these,
As if their purposes Thou couldst not read,
If only, first, in power, they stand,
Thy holiest laws they will trample on, for gain.
Then—for Thy kingdom, projects grand,
May follow. Unholy mockery, all, that!
Christ, O, Christ, hear me, again.
Such dreadful sights we looked upon—my inmost soul
Rebels. Thy gifts, so all, in vain.
Thy gifts of intellect to man. Perverted use

They make of them. Only, to kill,
Thought, seemed employed—every device Satanic hate
Could bring to bear, was used. Man's skill
To manufacture war's accursed tools, and get
Highest reward for that, by all
Is sought. And the subjects—the children of these types
Of so-called civilized nations, call,
Call for Thy pity, O, our pitying Lord.
For they are taught that love for home,
Love for their country, and their country's flag,
Wherever they are called to roam,
Means to stand up, and be shot down like dogs—like dogs;
Or, if not killed, whither they may be,
Forevermore, to hold up legless, armless flaps,
As proofs of love and loyalty.
Think of it, Christ! Was that the doctrine Thou didst teach?
List, for another while! The roar
Of all the infernal guns of earth,
Had scarcely yet begun, when o'er
The world flashed the news, 'an important engagement
With the enemy was on,' and men,
With appetites like demons, sought breathlessly
For all the gory details, then.
And, O, Christ, hear this! Men, Thy so-called ministers,
Defiled Thine holy altars, there,
By praying for victory on their country's flag,
Victory, for murder's work, where,

They should only pray for peace and surcease
From all strife. Impious breath,
From impious lips! We flung it back to earth.
Did not such victory mean death
To many a husband, father, son, with homes
Made desolate for aye? O, Thou,
Who left Thy home in heaven, to dwell
Amid the homeless ones of earth, know
What such desolation means? We struck, at least,
One keynote, then; when, such as they,
Pollute the air with so-called prayer. Keynote
To doctrine false. When they can say
“Amen,” to ruler’s shout for war, it stamps them false
To country and to Thee. Wonder
I, no longer, now, so many to be found,
Who thirst for war, and thunder
Forth the doctrine, that even Christ came not to earth
To bring peace—but—a sword. Hear them,
Blasphemous teachings, all. The sword of conscience,
Thou wouldst have all bear, and use, when
Overcoming sin’s defilement, in their hearts,
Was changed, to mean, the sword
That mutilates and kills, in war’s unholy march.
Thou didst leave Thy home of peace, and poured
Thy precious blood for earth’s redemption from all sin,
And it has come to this—to this!
See, Christ! Thine angels bow their heads, and weep for Thee.

That, in an hour of perfect bliss,
We should be forced to ask, of what avail, for them,
Thy sacrifice, with care and fret,
With buffetings and scorn; of what avail, for them,
Thine agonies and bloody sweat ?
O, Christ! our songs are hushed—aside we lay the harps
To ask of Thee, with self-same breath,
Of what avail, that Thou didst wear that crown of thorns,
And suffered agonies and—death ? ”
And silence reigned—and the shining lights grew dim.
Then—the sobs of the angels swept,
Where song had been—and—down, on His regal breast,
Fell low, His kingly head—and—Jesus wept.

Barberry Bittersweet.

